We continue to publish our Annual Newsletter. Our goal is to provide an update of what is happening within our division at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine/Jackson Memorial Hospital. Currently I am entering my 15th year as Chief and Program Director. Fortunately, even during challenging times, our division continues to grow and expand its position on our academic campus. This directly correlates with our ability to continue to recruit outstanding residents. Many will ultimately become our colleagues and often our neighbors. Through a variety of activities with our outstanding medical students, we are able to ensure the progression of excellent young physicians into our specialty.

In our Private Office which is located at Jackson South Community Hospital, the faculty continues to grow the Hand fellowship as well as our Aesthetic practices. With the new construction on the Jackson South campus, the division will look to develop enhanced additional professional relationships with The Comprehensive Breast Center and The International Surgical Services. As these develop, we should be able to increase our clinical practices in the areas of post-mastectomy breast and post-bariatric surgery reconstruction. The University Of Miami Hospital (previously Cedars Medical Center) serves as the cornerstone of The University of Miami Health Systems. The division has integrated resident education and clinical practices unto this hospital. With the addition of two new faculty members, Drs. Jaime Flores and Chris Salgado, and our newly refurbished private office in the West Wing, we will continue to expand our available services in the areas of post-mastectomy breast reconstruction, aesthetic surgery, coverage of orthopedic oncologic defects, and reconstructive microsurgery. In addition, the division is collaborating with the new UM Chief of Bariatric Surgery, Dr. Nestor de la Cruz in providing post-bariatric plastic surgery reconstruction. At the Miami Veterani’s Administration Medical Center, the Plastic Surgery service under the direction of Dr. Zubin Panthaki maintains continued growth in the areas of general reconstructive surgery, hand and upper extremity surgery. This clinical exposure adds further depth and variety to our resident education. To further the education of our Hand Fellow and plastic surgery residents in Pediatric hand surgery, Dr. Panthaki maintains a bi-monthly pediatric hand clinic at Miami Children’s Hospital.

Cornerstone to our residency program remains Jackson Memorial Hospital. This institution provides an unparalleled source of clinical material for the education and training of residents. In addition, we maintain a very visible presence at Jackson South Community Hospital. This allows us to provide easy access to patients from South Dade County as well as West Palm Beach due to its proximity to the Florida Turnpike.

As members of the staff at Jackson Health Systems, we have a central focus on the training of future plastic surgeons. Our division has always been fortunate to recruit superb residents into the program. A vast number go onto to pass necessary certifying examinations and make significant contributions to their local communities and the specialty. To fulfill the ACGME Core Competency requirements, the division maintains an active comprehensive teaching schedule. These include the traditional educational formats such as Mock Oral Examinations, Journal Clubs, Didactic Sessions, and Grand Rounds. In addition, we have had an active Visiting Professorship Program. This has continued to be an
exceptional partnership with our colleagues within The Miami Dade Plastic Surgery Society. We have been able to co-host ASAPS, ASMS, PSEF, and ASSH Visiting Professors. In addition, the Miami Society has developed their own Visiting Professorship which they have graciously shared with our program. Initial visitor was Dr. Tim Martin from San Francisco who shared his innovative experience in facelift. We have developed some enhancements to the educational program with the invaluable expertise and assistance of our outstanding voluntary faculty. Each resident is required to complete a minimum of one year of research project that is expected to be published in a peer reviewed journal or presented at a regional or national meeting. This has enhanced their appreciation and understanding of the plastic surgery literature. We meet as a group to discuss the direction and progress of their projects. The focus is to again deepen their perception of the content and quality of the plastic surgery literature. This aspect will have a significant future effect on their perpetual learning and practice improvement. We have added a number of other innovative aspects to traditional residency training as well. Upon entering the program, the resident is given an introductory packet with long-term academic assignments and a basic plastic surgery book to begin review of the plastic surgery literature. In addition, they are assigned a “mentor”, this is one of our active Voluntary faculty. They serve as a guide not only through the residency program itself, but as long-term advisor and counselor to enhance the individual’s future growth and development within our specialty. Mentors have regularly scheduled meetings in an informal setting to assist the program director with solving any perceived issues. We have also instituted The Business of Plastic Surgery 101. This successful course has been under the leadership of Dr. Randy Miller with input and expertise from a number of our other Voluntary faculty. They cover such important subjects as contracts, designing an office, partnerships, ethical marketing, and hiring and assigning staff responsibilities. Residents have overwhelmingly found this to be invaluable educational experience.

Changes are forthcoming in the education of Plastic Surgery Residents. ACGME has requested an increase in the period of training for a plastic surgery resident in both Independent and Integrated Programs. Our residency, which is an independent format will now go to three years.

We are increasing our complement to a total of nine residents (3 per year) from the previous allocation of six. The goal is to enhance our residents’ basic fund of knowledge and clinical practice upon entry into the practice of plastic surgery. New rotations will include: Dermatology, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Anesthesiology, Otolaryngology, Ophthalmology, Orthopedics, and Surgical Oncology.

As faculty at The University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, much of our other focus is on the education and training of medical students. We have an extremely active Plastic Surgery interest group. The division has routinely directed suturing courses for our UM Medical students. Students have participated in innumerable research projects and have published a significant number of papers in peer reviewed journals. Through a partnership with the Miami Dade Plastic Surgery Society, a limited number of medical students are invited to the regularly scheduled educational activities. This allows them further exposure to the community practice of plastic surgery. In addition, they actively join other divisional educational venues. This close working bond with our medical school students will ensure a continued generation of incoming excellent residents into our specialty.

Backbone to academic plastic surgery, in my opinion is a commitment to basic science research. This will ensure continued innovation and progress in our field. Through the Laboratory on Sex and Gender Differences in Health and Disease, we continue to evaluate various aspects gender influencing wound healing and aging.

Our faculty also possesses a significant commitment to both our academic community and local, regional and national plastic societies. Faculty serves on various important University of Miami and hospital committees such as Promotion and Tenure, Admissions, and Credentialing. Dr. Oeltjen serves as Treasurer of The Miami Dade Plastic Surgery Society. Dr. Panthaki serves as a member of the In-service exam committee and ASSH as well as completing the ASPS Pathways to leadership program. Dedication to our community is further enhanced by our regularly scheduled surgical missions to Port Au-Prince Haiti in collaboration with Medishare. Information about Volunteering and donating resources can be obtained through our Facebook site and our website: Cleftfreehaiti.org. The catastrophe that struck our neighbors in Haiti brought our further participation in providing immediate help with Dr. Barth Green and Medishare. We are currently working on a project to help provide long-term reconstructive care of the Haitian people.

As I reflect on the last 15 years here at University of Miami, I have experienced many “Eureka moments”. I see our future will continue to evolve and progress. We as a division remain committed to our mission of providing excellent cost effective patient care and training opportunities for our plastic surgery residents and medical students. We always look forward to visits and e mails from our graduates and neighbors detailing their experiences as well as joys and successes.
FACULTY UPDATES

ZUBIN J. PANTHAKI, M.D.

The new academic year has seen some significant changes in our Division of Plastic Surgery more significant of which involves the departure of Dr. Armstrong to South Carolina. In light of this, I have taken over the responsibilities as Chief of Plastic Surgery at the Miami Veterans Affairs Medical Center, and we have continued to grow the service at the Miami VA, now performing about 300 cases per year with broad case-mix continuing. In addition, Dr. Thaller and Dr. Oeltjen have also started coming to the Miami VA and are rounding out the experiences at the VA in terms of craniofacial, breast reconstruction, and head and neck reconstruction in addition to our broad base of general surgery, dermatology, vascular surgery, neurosurgery, and spinal cord surgery services offered. The mix of reconstructive opportunities offered at the Miami VA provides an outstanding educational experience for the plastic surgery residents and fellows. In fact, the role of the Miami VA in residency training is expected to continue to increase over the forthcoming years as our residency program transitions to a three-year program with several more rotations at the Miami VA expected to develop. In addition, the Miami VA Hand Surgery Services continue to grow with approximately 350 cases per year now being performed with the variety and complexity of the cases gradually increasing and improving, leading to better patient care and better service for our veterans, as well as, better educational experience for our residents and fellows. The Miami Children’s Hospital Pediatric Hand Service also continues and has gradually grown to involve several patients being referred from the community for pediatric hand fractures and congenital deformities. This complements our hand fellowship experience and our residency program very well by adding specialty services, which previously had not been well developed. Overall, the year has seen some significant changes, but these have also made certain opportunities, which we have taken advantage of and this continues to develop our program into one of the best programs in the country.

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This is in addition to continued breast reconstructive efforts at Sylvester Cancer Center. We continue to offer the full range of breast reconstruction from deep inferior epigastric artery perforator free flaps to implant based reconstruction. Referred patients come from the West coast of Florida to South America.

DENIZ DAYICIOGLU, M.D.

I completed an integrated plastic and reconstructive surgery program in Istanbul Turkey in 2007. My experience there included a wide variety of fundamental plastic surgery cases such as craniofacial trauma, cleft surgery, burns and all aspects of reconstruction for six years. UM has offered the experience to work with recognized leaders in plastic surgery within a supportive environment that has allowed me to strengthen my skills in new and exciting ways.

DENIZ DAYICIOGLU, M.D.

Am I on board? I have been fortunate to experience the University of Miami in a very unique way over the last three years. Working as the hand, microsurgery and reconstructive fellow has allowed me to hone my clinical skills not only in microsurgery and surgery of the hand, but also in reconstruction of face, breast and lower extremity.

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CHRISTOPHER J. SALGADO, M.D.

Chris will be joining the University of Miami Plastic Surgery faculty after 11 years in academic practice. He received his medical degree from Georgetown University School of Medicine in 1995 where he remained for his general surgery training. His plastic surgery training was completed at the University of Rochester in New York and he then served as a Major in the U.S. Army for four years fulfilling his commitment as a plastic surgeon in 2004. Following a microvascular reconstruction fellowship in Taiwan his clinical and research interests are in postoncologic (cancer) reconstruction, genital and perineal functional and aesthetic surgery, aesthetic body contouring, limb salvage, lymphedema and trauma reconstruction. He has authored over 50 peer-reviewed articles, written multiple book chapters and serves on the Editorial Board of a leading plastic surgery journal. Chris can also read and speak Spanish and Brazilian-Portuguese.
CURRENT RESIDENTS AND HAND FELLOW UPDATE

MICHAEL LOFGREN, M.D., 2009 has been a very productive year for Dr. Lofgren with the completion of his board certification in General Surgery. He has contributed to the on-line plastic surgery website “Plastic Surgery Hyperguide” on topics including bone grafting and assorted skin pathology. On a personal note, he became engaged to his fiancé, a general surgery resident currently completing training at Eastern Virginia Medical School. 2010 will certainly be a busy year. With wedding plans in full swing as well as joining a private practice Plastic Surgery group in the Hampton Roads area of Virginia. His practice will include a broad mix of breast reconstruction and cosmetic procedures. Additionally, he will be participating in the department’s medical mission trip to Haiti. The mission trip gives him the opportunity to not only use his newly acquired surgical skills but also to reach out to a population in dire need of specialized care.

WROOD KASSIRA, M.D., Highlights of Dr. Kassira’s residency experience include breast augmentation and reconstruction, fillers and Botox training, facial, hand and lower extremity trauma at Ryder Trauma Center, body contouring, facial aesthetics, and craniofacial surgery. Dr. Kassira’s interests include microvascular surgery, aesthetic surgery, lower extremity, head and neck, and breast reconstruction, including prosthetic and autologous based reconstruction. Dr. Kassira is excited to graduate in June and hopes to travel and learn from other leading plastic surgeons before returning back to Miami.

MARI REBANE, M.D., Mari will be doing a Craniofacial fellowship with Dr. Tony Wolfe at Miami Children’s Hospital once she completes her plastic surgery residency. She plans on moving back to the North-East for practice. Mari and her husband, Anthony have a beautiful 15 month old daughter, Sophia.

PIOTR SKOWRONSKI, M.D., Piotr maintains an interest in tissue engineering technology. Furthermore, the development and expanded clinical utilization of alloplastic materials as well as negative pressure remains a critical component in his plastic surgery education. In his spare time, he enjoys golfing and painting.

ARTHUR DESROSIEERS, M.D., Arthur’s interests are in craniofacial and pediatric plastic surgery; he has recently contributed to 3 peer-reviewed publications on cleft care: microform cleft lip repair with intraoral digitations (first author), ‘stuffy’ nose rhinoplasty for cleft nose deformity (second author), and correction of secondary cleft lip deformity using the Whistle flap procedure. Additionally, he was awarded the prestigious Regan Fellowship from Operation Smile to participate on international mission trips performing cleft lip and palate surgeries. Arthur is on the Speaker’s Bureau for Operation Smile and was invited to be the headline guest speaker at a very successful fashion show fundraiser held at the Viceroy Hotel, with proceeds supporting the Haiti Earthquake relief effort. Arthur enjoys the diverse cultural opportunities in Miami, and in his spare time enjoys traveling, photography, and surfing. He is looking forward to returning to Los Angeles when he starts his practice, to be closer to family.

MICHAEL LAKE, M.D., Michael feels that the residency program has offered him a broad range of experience in plastic surgery, with its diverse expertise not only within UM/JMH but also in the community. The city is a great place to live. There is a diverse cultural background along with so many things to do that makes this like a long term vacation. Michael plans on returning to the U.S. Army to serve out his time as a plastic surgeon in Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, TX and anticipates on returning to Miami when he completes his military commitment.

SARA YEGIYANTS, M.D., born in Armenia, grew up in Los Angeles. Graduated magna cum laude from Cal Poly, Pomona with a major in Microbiology, minor in Chemistry, and MS in Biological Sciences. She graduated from Albany Medical College in 2004 with awards in Plastic and Transplant Surgery. She returned to Los Angeles where she completed general surgery training at Kaiser Permanente Los Angeles Medical Center. During residency she was awarded Research and Resident Merit awards. She is Board Certified in General Surgery and after completing Hand Fellowship will continue her training in Plastic Surgery at University of Illinois, Chicago. She is married and has an 18 month old beautiful girl, Nyri.
Rosie A. Roeder was born in Brazil and first immigrated to the United States at the age of 9. She obtained her medical doctorate from the University of Vermont College of Medicine. She is a general surgery resident at JMH and is currently a PGY-3 in the first of two years of a research fellowship with the Division of Plastic Surgery. Rosie and her husband Michael welcomed their first child, Noah Sebastian Roeder, in August of 2009. Rosie and her husband Michael welcomed their first child, Noah Sebastian Roeder, in August of 2009.

RESEARCH LAB UPDATE

We continue to study the effects of steroid hormone on wound healing. After many years of examining the role that estrogen plays, we are now looking at how vitamin D and its receptor affect wound healing, collagen metabolism, and skin aging.

Our aim is to establish if topical vitamin D can be used as an adjunct to promote healing of difficult wounds.

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The University of Miami/Miller School of Medicine Cleft Lip and Palate Clinic continues to provide care for patients with isolated cleft lip and/or palate, as well as patients with various craniofacial syndromes and other congenital abnormalities. We provide a multidisciplinary team consisting of: Pediatrics, Genetics, Nutrition, Psychology, CMS Nursing, Audiology and Plastic Surgery. We continue to follow patients that have been with the team for many years as well as determine a plan of care for newly diagnosed patients. Our goal is to ensure a comprehensive plan of care that will address the growth and development of the child throughout the years. Community resources for support are also offered to our patients and their families. Plans for the future may include sponsoring some social events.

We announce with Pride our Graduates’ American Board of Plastic Surgery Exam Results
Written: Rajiv Iyer, Erick Martell, Ramiro Perez
Oral: Jason Altman, Jonathan Fisher, Cassidy Mitchell

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL!
As ASMS Visiting Professor, I made presentations and discussed difficult cases this past spring, summer and fall. Both residents and faculty have been gracious hosts and interested audiences. There is great enthusiasm for the Visiting Professor program and the visits are much appreciated. Speaking on facial and nasal cosmetic and reconstructive surgery topics, I took part in the Ohio Valley Society of Plastic Surgeons Annual Meeting, and visited the residency programs of North Carolina at Chapel Hill this past summer. During the fall, I will visit the University of Seattle, University of Illinois Chicago, and Loyola University Chicago. I will present information on Outcomes in Nasal Reconstruction at the ASMS symposium which precedes the ASPS meeting this fall. After the first year I will visit training programs at John Hopkins University and the University of Miami. Other visits are pending.

KENNETH FAN-CLASS OF 2011

One of the most important steps in the life of a medical student is the transition from preclinical to clinical years. Suddenly, the student goes from the center of the experience in the lecture hall to an observer on the wards. As observers, learning is best achieved through diverse and plentiful experiences. The Division of Plastic Surgery at the University of Miami provides the necessary constant stimulus to help facilitate understanding of the vast field of plastic surgery.

Whether it be grand rounds, journal clubs, or guest lecturers, there is an endless supply of education for the medical student. Suturing workshops sponsored by the division provide an introduction to the technical skills necessary to be a surgeon. Students who chose plastic surgery as a 4th year elective had nothing but wonderful things to say of the rotation. Eileen Bernal, CC4, wrote “I was able to see and participate in a variety of different surgeries.” Derek Uvila, CC4, stated “From day one, I was included in all aspects of patient care. I had an excellent experience rotating on the service.”

The division also brings medical students on surgical cleft lip/palate mission trips, affording an in depth view into the plastic surgery’s rich tradition of giving back. These powerful experiences changes perspective. “I was so thankful I had this opportunity to witness these surgeries. I will never forget the children’s faces afterwards—swollen, yet filled hope.” remarked Benjamin Lemelman, MS2. Dominic Maggio, MS2, explained how he felt the “profound moments of happiness after surgery when our patients looked into the mirror for the very first time.”

Plastic surgery can hold claim to be one of the most mentioned, yet misunderstood, fields of medicine. The division’s multitude of events provides exposure to the vast creativity and innovation present in plastic surgery. Dr. Thaller’s personal commitment to medical student education is commendable, and on behalf of the student body at the University of Miami Miller School Of Medicine, I want to thank the Division of Plastic Surgery for their tireless efforts in providing consistent and dependable student education.
THE PALM BEACH COUNTY SOCIETY OF PLASTIC SURGEONS, INC.

By Alan Pillersdorf, M.D.

Is a group of board certified plastic surgeons working in Palm Beach County, that has been in existence since 1974. The mission statement is to promote collegiality and foster promotion of the Specialty of Plastic Surgery by unity, not competitiveness. Under its current leadership of Alan B. Pillersdorf, M.D., FACS, President, Lawrence Korpeck, M.D., Vice-President, and Raphael Cabrera, M.D. Secretary/Treasurer, the organization meets four times a year for educational purposes. We invite leaders in Plastic Surgery to speak with us about timely topics, and issues relevant to our profession. In our December 2009 meeting in Palm Beach we discussed Case Presentations, and had among our audience, Dr. Michael Patipa, OculoPlastic Surgeon and honorary member, and recent new transplant, Dr. Oscar Ramirez. The organization is planning an interdisciplinary meeting with the local dermatologists to discuss timely issues. Plastic Surgeons must be at the helm of Cosmetic Surgery. We feel we must lead by strength and deed.

Other legislative accomplishments include the following:

1. Senate Bill 1122, signed by Governor Crist, specifies rules regarding assignment of benefits. No longer will a patient receive a check for services provided for and billed for by the physician.

2. Enactment of the Prompt Pay Act, which requires insurance companies to correspond to claims within 30 days or be liable for the entire amount billed. With this information, many plastic surgeons in the state have referenced Prompt Pay Act regulations and have increased their collections on insurance based cases.

The Florida Society of Plastic Surgeons (FSPS) is delighted to provide this update for the University of Miami Division of Plastic Surgery annual newsletter.

As one of the most active statewide specialty societies, the FSPS represents greater than 10% of all board certified plastic surgeons in the United States. The organization, meetings, advocacy and educational opportunities have become a model for other specialty societies around the country.

The most recent annual meeting of the FSPS was held at the Turnberry Isle Resort in Aventura. Dr. Carl Hartrampf delivered the keynote speech highlighting his journey while pioneering TRAM flap breast reconstruction. Lectures given by Mark Jewell, Scott Spear, and Jim Stuzin filled the lecture hall with plastic surgeons, eager to learn and refine their techniques.

FSPS showcased their new Patient Safety Foundation. The mission of the foundation is to provide public education related to concepts and standards of safety in plastic surgery. In addition, Dr. James Grotting and Dr. Leroy Young presented a comprehensive seminar on safety issues such as DVT prophylaxis, conscious sedation, hypothermia and combined surgical procedures.

Residency program directors from the University of Miami, the Cleveland Clinic and the University of South Florida gave updates on plastic surgery education. There was no overlap and all were superb presentations. The resident research paper competition highlighted new technology, salvage of complications and surgical initiatives of the World Health Organization.

FLORIDA SOCIETY OF PLASTIC SURGEONS

By Onelio Garcia, MD and Randy Miller, MD

As in previous years, the resident presentations were very well received by members of the society. Following the competition, a medical student from the University of Miami gave a lecture on the plastic surgery mission in Haiti.

Mr. Chris Nuland, general counsel for the FSPS, gave a thorough legislative update providing details on new rules and regulations applicable to the practice of plastic surgery. He also updated the members regarding the current legislative agenda which includes scope of practice, political action and patient safety.

Mr. Nuland also explained the regulatory requirements associated with office to ER transfers. Many of the doctors in the room did not know that there was a requirement to report these cases of adverse incident to the state. Besides not knowing the rule, many doctors did not know how to proceed in such a case. An algorithm was provided to mitigate risk associated with this type of scenario. The FSPS members continue to appreciate the availability and expertise of Mr. Nuland.

Recent legislative accomplishments include elimination of a 5% federal tax on cosmetic surgery and procedures (commonly referred to as “Botox”). This provision was removed from the Senate health care bill prior to its passing in December of 2009. What a great victory for organized medicine! The FSPS along with other state and national societies banded together in a unified front and were able to achieve this great victory on a federal level.
Greetings from the Miami Society of Plastic Surgeons! In addition to my role as Assistant Professor at the University of Miami, it is been my pleasure to serve as the Society’s Secretary/Treasurer for 2009-2010. The Miami Society of Plastic Surgeons has begun an exciting year continuing the tradition of sponsoring an extensive variety of speakers at great venues all across Miami.

As a community based institution, we take pride in our membership of community physicians including a large number of UM alumni. As always, all UM alumni are welcome at our Society meetings. If you are planning a trip to South Florida, please contact me and I would be happy to include you on the mailing list of our upcoming events. Our dinner meetings are both educational and social events that provide an excellent venue for academic discourse along with an opportunity to see friends and fellow alumni in the profession. The dinners provide a venue for nationally recognized speakers to present their expertise in a setting far more intimate than in our larger national meetings.

Thus far, the 2009-2010 year has continued in the recent tradition of improved service and high impact meetings. Continued streamlining of the communication and record keeping has allowed for a more efficiently run society. Thus far we have had two dinner meetings. The first was a presentation by Dr. Timothy Marten at Morton’s Steak House in Coral Gables as sponsored by Ethicon Endo-Harmonic on November 3, 2009. At the presentation, Dr. Marten presented his astonishing results in his talk titled “High SMAS Face and Mid-face Lift: Simultaneous Single Flap Lifting of the Mid-face, Check, and Jawline.” The second was a presentation by Dr. Oscar Ramirez at Marinheiro in downtown Miami as sponsored by Medicis/Dysport on December 8, 2009. At his presentation, Dr. Ramirez presented his continued advance in the field of cosmetic rejuvenation in his talk titled “Biplanar Endoscopic Assisted Facial Rejuvenation.”

In collaboration with the University of Miami, upcoming presentations include Dr. Frederick Menick in April, 2010, Dr. James Grotting in May, 2010, and Dr. Mary McGrath in September, 2010. We look forward to listening to these Plastic Surgery leaders present their insight in their areas of expertise.

As the year continues, we look forward to and welcome anyone new to the community who would like to join the Miami Society of Plastic Surgeons. With the addition of new members and the loyal support of the current UM alumni and the members of the Miami Society of Plastic Surgeons, we continue the tradition of a Plastic Surgery Society that is an educational, vibrant, and relevant voice for plastic surgery in South Florida.

Hope to see you at our next meeting and thanks again for your support.

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Elimination of a grassroots effort in Tallahassee which almost successfully flew under the radar. A bill was proposed that would prohibit physicians from performing elective surgery during the weeks that they were on emergency room call.

It also required that physicians could only take call at one emergency room at a time. The proposal suggested that AHCA control all ER call in the state. Because of our active effort and involvement in Tallahassee, we voiced our concerns which led to defeat of this proposal. We were amazed to learn that in one day our practice of medicine could have changed dramatically.

Dr. Enrique Fernandez (FSPS Past President and Trustee) was successful in crafting and helping to pass the TIME (Truth In Medical Education) bill. This bill requires that physicians who advertise board certification must state the specific board. This has minimized the false advertising practice of non-plastic surgeons claiming board certification in plastic surgery. This is yet another example of what the FSPS is accomplishing in Tallahassee, benefiting all plastic surgeons in the state.

Needless to say, all is well with our political action. Florida plastic surgeons have received great benefit from these efforts.

After a stellar year as President of the FSPS, Dr. James Matas has handed the gavel to Dr. John O’Brien. The other 2010 officers include Dr. Randy Miller (President-Elect), Dr. Donato Viggiano (Secretary) and Dr. Galen Perdikis (Treasurer). The board of directors includes Dr. Braun Graham, Dr. Casey Rumsey, Dr. Paul Smith, Dr. Vitale-Lewis (Past President) and Dr. James Matas (Immediate Past President).

To a great extent, plastic surgery advocacy happens at the state level. Whether a member of the society or not, all Florida plastic surgeons benefit from the political action and accomplishments of the FSPS. Our next annual meeting will be held at the Boardwalk Hotel in Orlando, Florida on November 11-13, 2010. We encourage all Florida plastic surgeons to attend, learn and become part of our society. Together we are smarter, safer and stronger.
Shortly after the birth of our twin boys Dr. Seth Thaller came to our hospital room to tell my husband Kendall Cogan and me that our son Colton had a cleft in the soft palate. We had also just learned that Colt had a rare congenital heart defect (TAPVR) that required open heart surgery. So the cleft palate seemed minor in comparison.

Colt’s open heart surgery went well. But a few weeks later when he was recovering in the PICU he suffered a cardiac arrest. After 20 minutes the medical team was able to get his heart pumping again. Colt is a fighter. And we finally got to take him home and reunite him with his twin brother Cade on January 30th, 2009.

This is when we learned that having a child with a cleft palate can be very challenging. Colt required a special haberman nipple to drink his milk and in the beginning his feeds took a long time. When he started eating solids he would get frustrated because he would sneeze and the food would come out his nose. In addition, the cleft was the likely cause for the seven ear infections Colt suffered through. Needless to say, we were anxious to have the surgery to repair his cleft palate.

Dr. Seth Thaller performed the surgery on the morning of January 12th, 2010 when Colt was a little more than a year old. Kendall and I were very nervous, as any parent would be. But the medical team put us at ease. And Dr. Thaller assured us the repair would be simple and the recovery fairly quick.

Colt was sent home with no-no’s which proved to be a huge benefit. Up until this point Colt was only doing army crawls on his stomach. But with the no-no’s, he was forced to crawl up on his arms. He wore these for ten days and I’m happy to say he is still crawling using his arms.

His cleft is healing very well. We used a syringe to feed him milk for the first couple of days, but Colt is now using a bottle with a regular nipple now. He is eating very well, and eating a lot. He’s enjoying eating chunkier foods for the first time in his life. And he also seems to be testing out some new sounds that he can now make. The recovery has gone smoother than we anticipated and Colt’s spirits seem to have improved dramatically, likely also due to the ear tubes being inserted.

But as Dr. Thaller jokes, Colt is still not enjoying “beer and pretzels” yet. Let’s hope he holds off on the beer for at least 20 more years.
It was Christmas Eve 2008. I had just gotten home, exhausted from another long day at work as Vice President/General Manager at Saks Fifth Avenue, Bal Harbour. I was looking forward to spending the evening with some friends in celebration of the holiday. My father, who was visiting for a month from Ohio, told me that I had a certified letter waiting for me. When I opened it, two words written in caps jumped off the page: IMMEDIATE AND URGENT. I couldn't believe what I was reading. Unfortunately, my fears that there might really be an issue after having to repeat my mammogram earlier in the month had come true. I was already aware of the statistic that 1 in every 8 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime, but I really didn't think I would be the 1 in 8 that would face breast cancer. I wasn't sure how serious this really was, but nonetheless it was not the kind of gift I expected to receive Christmas Eve.

Somewhat still in denial, I proceeded with many more tests and a biopsy. On February 2nd, my world stopped momentarily, when I received the call that the biopsy verified that I in fact had breast cancer, but the good news was that I caught it early. One of my first thoughts was “Oh my God, this is real. I was shocked by the diagnosis. I was the 1 in 8? How could this be? Me? I could give you 15 reasons why it shouldn't have been me. My thoughts then quickly turned to my son, I decided then that I had to beat this, no matter what was ahead of me. He had lost his father suddenly and unexpectedly the year before, and he wasn't going to lose his mother too!

I knew then, that I had to get in touch with the people I knew at Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center, for guidance on the next steps.

Since 2003, Saks Fifth Avenue, Bal Harbour has supported Sylvester with it's annual Key to the Cure charitable giving initiative, we had raised over a quarter of a million dollars for Sylvester, and during that time, I had the pleasure of working with several wonderful Doctors and associates. I had a level of trust and respect already for Sylvester, and knew that Sylvester was the best place for me to face and hopefully be cured of this horrible disease.

Initially, I only told a few friends and close associates. I kept working as if nothing was wrong, and tried to keep my life moving forward as it would have normally.

My first appointment was with Dr. Moffat, and then Dr. Panthaki, my plastic surgeon for reconstruction. I was horrified at the news that in my case, the best approach was to have a bi-lateral mastectomy. He explained that I had high-grade ductal carcinoma in situ with micro invasion, and that breast conservation was not an option in my case, he also informed me that he had to remove 15 lymph nodes in order to verify if it had spread or not. Of course I’m saying all this in layman’s terms, but I knew that Dr. Moffat took every precaution to ensure that he could tell me that I was cancer free and for that, I am eternally grateful.

Unfortunately for me and Dr. Panthaki, the aggressive surgery to get me cancer free presented many challenges in the reconstruction process. Over the past year through my surgeries I have gotten to know Dr. Panthaki and his team Elizabeth and Carla very well.

It is a much longer journey to get “The Girls” re-built to “perfection” than I anticipated initially, as I was unaware of the process. I remember on a few early visits how I mapped out exactly when I would have each surgery for Doctor Panthaki. I effectively utilized the calendar that’s on the door in the patient rooms, and after each set back to my schedule, I re-presented my new plan. Looking back, knowing what I know now, I’m so appreciative at how he handled my insistent need to push and try to control the timing of the process. Since then, I’ve learned a lot about letting go of control and trusting the process which can only truly be done when you trust your doctor. Dr. Panthaki and his staff’s professionalism, yet caring and patient demeanor have made this journey a lot easier.

Facing breast cancer head on is a tough road that unfortunately too many women will have to take. While I had no say in whether or not I took this road, I did have a say in how I would handle it; with courage, strength, hope, optimism and faith. I also had a say in where I would face it, and who with. I’m glad I made the choices that I did. I look forward to enjoying a wonderful and healthy life with my son, family and friends. Who knows? I keep telling Dr. Panthaki that I am going to pose for the AARP version of Playboy…. it may happen! Now I know all things are possible!
We are in our plane descending to Port Au Prince, Haiti. It is now a reality that there are many demolished buildings—this time it is not on TV that we were watching for twenty days now.

We will be going to Haiti—every week another plastic surgeon—to follow each other—to perform plastic surgery in the UM/Medishare filled hospital, just next to the airport.

The field hospital is full of patients of Haiti who are welcoming and appreciative. They are easy to communicate with. One of them is a 5th year medical student in Haiti with an open tibial fracture. His has an ex fix but open wound needs skin grafting. With the help of all donated instruments we were able to do skin graft.

Medishare is such a great name because all I can see here is about sharing. We do mostly skin grafts, secondary closures, I&D’s mostly in the lower extremities. This will be a long term duty for the continuation of care for most of the injuries. Now the hospital has also become a referral center for ER as life moves on. We start hearing newborns in the OR. We open the tie over dressing on our medical student friend. Graft looks good. He is happy.

We welcome the next plastic surgeon that arrives.

We decide to communicate with plastic surgeons through www.plasticsurgeonsdiary.com. This has been a tremendous experience.
BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS


PUBLICATIONS

SETH R. THALLER, MD

- Thaller, Seth R. MD, Excision and Grafting of Palmoplantar Keratoderma. Accepted for publication, Journal of Craniofacial Surgery, September 2009
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ZUBIN J. PANTHAKI

- Choi, M,W, BS, Panthaki, ZJ, MD, Perez, Ramiro, MD, Armstrong, MB, MD, Burns of the Pediatric Hand Electrical Thermal Chemical, Journal of Craniofacial Surgery, July 2009

JOHN C. OELTJEN, MD

- Oeljten, J.C., MD, Thaller, MD, Perez, R., MD, A Review of Mandibular Angle Fractures, accepted for publication, Journal of Craniofacial Surgery, July 2009

MILTON B. ARMSTRONG, MD

So Many Reasons to Give

One of the easiest ways to support our efforts at UM is to get involved. We are thrilled by the support we've received thus far and are excited about the opportunity for involvement. No matter what size, your gifts play a key role in the success of the Division. There are opportunities to participate in a wide range of projects that provide support for research, education and training. Whatever you decide to support, you can know that your gift will help you to leave a legacy you can be proud of.

- The Plastic Surgery Resident’s Endowment Fund provides funds to help cover the costs of educational activities such as educational meetings, travel expenses to present abstracts, books, journals for resident’s library.

- The Cleft Lip and Palate Clinic provides individualized diagnosis and treatment of significant hemangiomas and vascular anomalies. Our team of physicians works closely with each child and family in an effort to provide the best medical plan for each child.

- Dr. Thaller Plastic Surgery Research Fund was established in the Division of Plastic Surgery to help fund research in Reconstructive Surgery.

Below is a pledge form for your completion and return. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions. Thank you in advance for your interest in supporting the University of Miami, Division of Plastic Surgery efforts.

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